



President & CEO Update

January 2014

Dear Board and Committee Members,

With your ongoing support, we are in an exciting period of growth for NRHI. We have built a solid foundation for standard cost measurement and reporting in our Healthcare Regional Cost Measurement and Transparency Project. We are building the framework for greater transparency in our new planning grant for the Center for Healthcare Transparency, and contingent upon approval, are soon to initiate a Regional Resource Network- a long standing goal for NRHI and one that we are well suited to reach. All of these projects reflect the growing recognition of the importance of your work, and the ongoing need to foster fundamental change in our healthcare system.

In order to meet shared objectives and expand NRHI's ability to support your work, we continue to bring talented individuals into our organization. I am very pleased to share that Kristin Majeska, MBA will be joining us full time as Senior Project Director for the Laura and John Arnold Foundation funded planning grant to enable greater transparency of healthcare across the US. Kristin brings years of experience in international venture philanthropy, non-profit development as well as a solid business background. We will be seeking to fill several other positions to meet the deliverables of new grants, including Vice President of Finance and Operations since the growth in our infrastructure brings significant operational challenges. The Finance and Executive Committees are providing valued guidance through this process.

Even though we are at a significant turning point in terms of organizational growth, we are committed to preserving the NRHI culture and focus. Meaningful and robust engagement across the membership defines and differentiates us. Staff share your commitment to mission, sense of purpose and respect for each other's and our members' expertise. As we organizationally expand, we want to sustain the entrepreneurial spirit of our organization that catalyzes rich collaboration and innovation. Thank you for your ongoing support and involvement through this exciting transition.

Best regards,

Elizabeth

PROPOSALS, PROJECTS AND FUNDING

- **Center for Healthcare Transparency:** Pending final execution of the grant agreement, NRHI will be the grantee for an 18 month planning grant to develop a regional infrastructure to produce transparent healthcare performance information across the US. The federated model proposed in the grant reflects the value of leveraging the data and other resources in a network of Regional Collaboratives. The Center for Healthcare Transparency will be established as a new 501©3 based in Texas with a 4-person Board of Directors including 2 LJAF representatives, David Lansky and myself. NRHI will form the project Executive Committee, a Technical Advisory Committee and a User Advisory Committee to oversee and guide the work and deliverables. The Pacific Business Group on Health will be the lead partner on the planning grant and will house several project staff. Deliverables include development of a resource library of best practices in data management and performance measurement and reporting; policy and legal analyses of barriers to development of a data and reporting infrastructure; development of publishing arrangements; exploration of a data 'hub' for single submissions from national health plans to Regional Collaboratives; innovative technology and data pilots; development of best practice in data use including QI and purchasing; and development of a multi-year plan for implementation. We continue to work with the Arnold Foundation team to execute a final grant agreement and operational plan. Funding will be available for multiple NRHI members to participate in the 18 month project as 'data centers' and/or innovation pilot sites. We will also be inviting NRHI members and outside experts to serve on the multiple advisory and governing councils. We look forward to exploring how this grant may further support the work of NRHI members. The expected start date is March 1, 2014.
- **Regional Resource Network:** In December, NRHI submitted our proposal to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for a Regional Resource Network, a vibrant, highly interactive, multi-platform, user-driven network that leverages the strengths of our RHICs and others to help achieve the Triple Aim. Reflecting input from members, we sought to balance a virtual online resource with direct support for members and emerging Collaboratives from NRHI staff, consultants and each other. We continue to work closely with RWJF as we are awaiting approval on this two year grant, but hope to move forward in March of 2014.
- **Healthcare Regional Cost Measurement and Transparency Project (Total Cost of Care)**
As we enter the third month of the project, the team has worked diligently to address the highest level of standardization possible, recognizing local commitments and demands and given the various constraints with individual data sets. The team addressed key issues including attribution, inclusion of substance abuse services and benchmark category definitions. There will be 4 different methods of producing the necessary aggregated data sets to produce the benchmarks. This will allow us to discuss the pros and cons of each which could inform best practices for future RHICs interested in producing comparable cost of care data. We are likely to have enough standardization across 4 of the 5 RHICs to create valid benchmarks for the calendar year 2012 analysis with hopes of including all 5 RHICs when we run the 2013 analysis later this year. Our technical planning phase is now complete and we are on track to begin the first round of analysis in early February while we plan for

the Physician 'Boot Camp' intended to share early results with regional physician leaders to better enable them to be cost measurement 'ambassadors' in their communities.

ADVOCACY

- **SGR:** Kelly Cleary of Akin Gump updated the Qualified Entity Collaborative on the status of the SGR legislation and its impact on the Qualified Entity program on our January call. CIVHC, WHIO and other members continue to provide important input to key Congressional leaders and staff about the need for changes to the program. Action may occur on the legislation in March and any interested member is encouraged to reach out to their delegation as soon as possible.

STATE AND FEDERAL DEVELOPMENTS

- **NRHI CMS Advisory Group:** In January we had our first meeting of an Advisory group for CMS and have been asked to continue to provide input from the regions. The monthly topics are being selected by CMS and this month focused on implementation of CG CAHPs in communities. Members with experience with CG CAHPs participated including MHQP, Maine Quality Counts!, WCHQ, and MNMCM. We look forward to working with more NRHI members as the forum continues.
- **Measures Application Partnership:** The MAP Coordinating Committee met in January to provide pre-rulemaking input to CMS on measures for their programs. CMS has expressed the value of this input and shared the frequency with which they adopt the MAP recommendations. As Chair, I presented the results of the MAP Health Insurance Exchange Quality Rating System Task Force that was tasked with advising the MAP Coordinating Committee on recommendations for the hierarchical structure, organization, and measures for the child and family core sets of the Quality Rating System (QRS). Additional information about the QRS measures and recommendations are available on the NQF website. The Coordinating Committee members also expressed support for NQF playing a more active role in advancing measurement science and facilitating public- and private-sector measure gap-filling activities.
- **NQF:** NQF has a new committee to evaluate and redesign their consensus process which I have joined. The goals of the work are to find ways of preserving collaboration as the stakes of measurement are raised and as organizational interests are challenged. Lessons learned about promoting 'high stakes' collaboration are likely relevant to all of us. I am also very pleased to share that both Jim Chase and Louise Probst have been elected to the NQF Board providing great representation for regional collaboratives!
- **IOM:** I am continuing to serve on IOM Consensus Committee on *Core Metrics for Better Health at Lower Cost* and serve as Chair of the Implementation Work Group. During our January meeting in California, Tom Williams presented to the committee about IHA's experience working with physicians using cost and quality measures and on how quality and cost measures can be used for improvement. Chris Queram also submitted invited testimony sharing the Wisconsin experience. IOM staff are now reaching out to the participants in our Total Cost of Care project to better understand the challenges of standardized implementation.

- **QEC:** The Qualified Entity Collaborative is continuing now with staff and financial support from the AF4Q National Program Office. Members seem to be finding value to sharing operational, business, advocacy and strategic issues. We will have an additional call in February to finalize planning for our in-person March meeting where we expect great attendance. Special thanks to Karen Feinstein and PRHI for providing additional financial support to enable attendance for lead data staff from RHICs. Harold and I will lead a meeting on the afternoon of March 11 with key staff from the AMA and other physician organizations about working together using QE data. We will have an all day meeting on the 12th to address strategic, operational and business issues as well as to talk directly with CMS and CMMI staff about regional-federal data partnership.

COMMUNICATIONS

- **Redesign of the NRHI website:** NRHI is in the process of updating and redesigning our website. We have developed the structure, strategy and web-user personas. Our goal is to create an optimal user experience for our visitors, while highlighting the work of our members. The site will also include an intranet for the Total Cost of Care project. Louise Merriman continues to solicit input from the member Communications Directors and we will be presenting the website at our next Board meeting in March.
- **Rebranding of NRHI and the RRN:** In anticipation of the launch of the new NRHI website and the RRN, we have undertaken preliminary work with a consultant brand advisor as to our brand platform and personality. As our profile is raised through national projects we hope to be prepared to effectively communicate about the mission and work of regional collaboratives. We have also been asked to develop a separate but related brand for the RRN. We will share progress with you over the next 6 weeks.

PRESENTATIONS, EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

- **National Governors Association Conference:** I presented and moderated a session at the 50-state NGA in Washington this month. The conference focused on implementation of health reform and alignment of federal, state and regional initiatives. David Lansky of PBGH and Lisa Letourneau of Maine Quality Counts also presented, sharing the work and perspective of regional collaboratives. It is clear that additional efforts are required to raise awareness of RHICs among many state government staff but inclusion of NRHI by NGA was a positive step.
- **IHA Conference:** Several NRHI members will be presenting at the IHA 9th Annual P4P conference in March in San Francisco. Tom Williams has offered a plenary forum this year that I will moderate highlighting regional collaboratives and the impact of your work. Once again there is a discount available to NRHI members who would like to attend.

OPERATIONS, STAFFING AND POLICIES

- **Staffing Updates:** We have hired Kristin Majeska, MBA as Senior Project Director for the Center for Healthcare Transparency. We will be seeking to fill several other positions to staff this project.

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- **Recruitment:** NRHI has been interviewing candidates for the Vice President of Finance and Operations and Network Director Positions. We will also be seeking two senior data analysts. **Board members are encouraged to help with these recruitments by circulating job postings found on our website at www.nrhi.org**
- **Policies:** We have drafted Procurement, Social Media and Communications Policies, which are integral as we build capacity in our organization. We will be receiving recommendations from our external accounting firm by April regarding any additional policies required for optimal financial management and segregation of duties.

WHAT'S COMING UP

- **Executive Committee Election!** We have a vacancy for an at-large member on the NRHI Executive Committee. Any full member is eligible to serve. The Executive Committee meets monthly. Please send nominations (or self nominations!) to me by **February 12th**.
- Finance, Executive, Governance and Strategic Planning Committees will all be meeting in February.
- The next NRHI Board meeting will be on March 14 from 12-3 ET. This will be a virtual meeting. Our next in-person Board meeting will be on June 20 in Portland, Oregon.
- The project team of the Healthcare Regional Measurement and Transparency Project (TCoC) will be meeting in Denver, CO on February 13. Thanks to CIVHC for hosting us!
- Due to the TCoC meeting and travel, the February NRHI Member webinar will be rescheduled to February 28 and will address selection and production of Health Insurance Exchange Measures.